

THE HEFLIN PHOTOGRAPHS

by Ralph Rankow

Our contributor, a New York professional photographer with a business on Broadway, was formerly photographic consultant to NICAP of Washington D.C. Rex Heflin, whose four photographs of an alleged UFO are the subject of this article, reported that he had given the photographs to an official of the North American Defence Agency. In *The Silencers at Work*, an article in our March/April 1967 issue, we mention this incident and carried a copy of Heflin's first photograph as our cover illustration. Mr. Charles Gibbs-Smith, the aviation historian, was not happy about the photograph (although we had made no claims concerning its authenticity), and posed a series of questions in a letter which was published in our July/August 1967 issue. Mr. Rankow's article first appeared in *Fate* magazine under the title: *The Disc with the Domed Top*.

REX HEFLIN never believed those flying saucer stories. Perhaps his four years of active police duty and F.B.I. training conditioned him to a "seeing is believing" attitude. Certainly flying saucers were not on his mind at 11.30 a.m., August 3, 1965, as he sat in his truck trying to get the two-way radio to work.

Heflin works for the Orange County Highways Department in California as a highway inspector. He was attempting to make radio contact with Road Maintenance Superintendent Ashcraft to report some tree limbs which were obstructing a railway crossing sign. But the radio suddenly had gone completely dead.

Then Heflin caught a glimpse of an aerial object from the corner of his eye; however, he says he thought it was a conventional aircraft, possibly from the nearby Marine air base. The object was moving slowly from his left toward the road in front of him. Only when the flying object stopped momentarily and hovered did Heflin look more closely. Then he saw a disc with a domed top! The sunlight which was filtering through some haze reflected from its surface. No sound reached him from the strange-looking vehicle.

Heflin grabbed his Model 101 Polaroid camera from the seat of the truck and photographed the disc through the windshield. The slowly moving object continued in an arc, over the road and off to Heflin's right. Not moving from the driver's seat Heflin now snapped the second photo,

through the truck's right front window.

At this point Heflin noticed a rotating beam of light coming from the centre of the object's underside. On a very light copy print this beam of light is faintly discernible. He then snapped the third photograph, through the same side window.

Heflin reported that the object maintained a relatively level altitude of about 150 feet in relation to the flat terrain; however, he noted that its motion resembled that of a gyroscope losing its stability. This same "wobbling effect" often has been reported in UFO sightings. As the object increased its speed and altitude it also seemed to gain stability. A smoke-like ring of vapour remained in the air after the object was gone. Heflin drove quickly to where the smoke ring still hung in the sky and, jumping out of his truck, photographed it. He described the smoke as blue-black.

After the strange air vehicle left the area Heflin found his two-way radio working perfectly and he had no trouble contacting his Santa Ana base radio station.

NICAP, The National Investigations Committee on Aerial Phenomena, is a private, non-profit organisation which checks UFO reports. As soon as this story broke on the wire services NICAP sent two investigators, Ed Evers, of Anaheim, Calif., and John Grey, of Huntington Beach, Calif., to see Rex Heflin. These men both are engineers working on the Apollo moon

probe at North American Aviation Company.

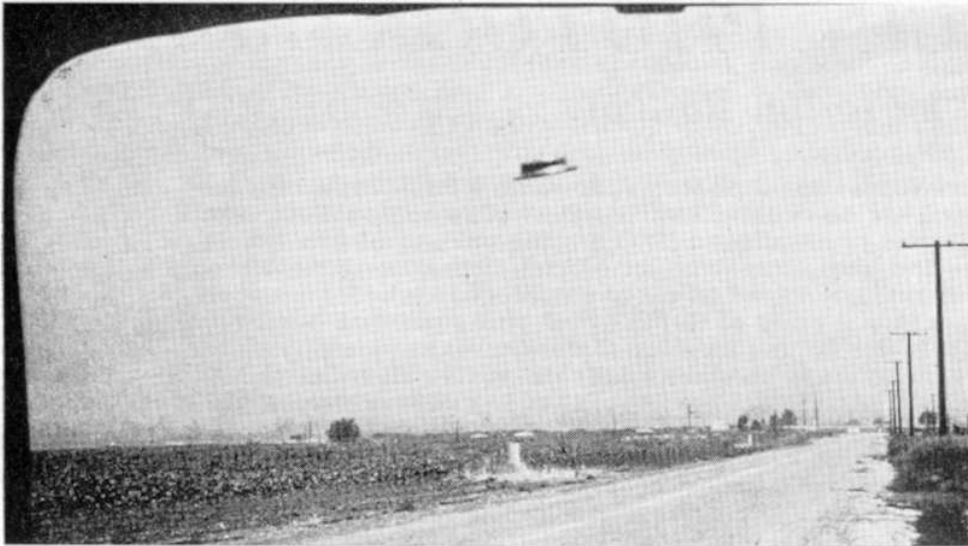
After talking with Rex Heflin and getting his signature on a four-page statement Evers and Grey started to check out some points in the story. What about that radio interference? Was the radio faulty?

The NICAP investigators got in touch with the superintendent of traffic control in Santa Ana, a Mr. Kimmel. Kimmel explained that since radio messages come through his office, he himself had heard the transmission difficulties. He said that later he told Heflin to take the truck over to the shop and have the radio checked. This was done and they found nothing wrong with it. Kimmel further said, "It has been perfectly O.K. ever since."

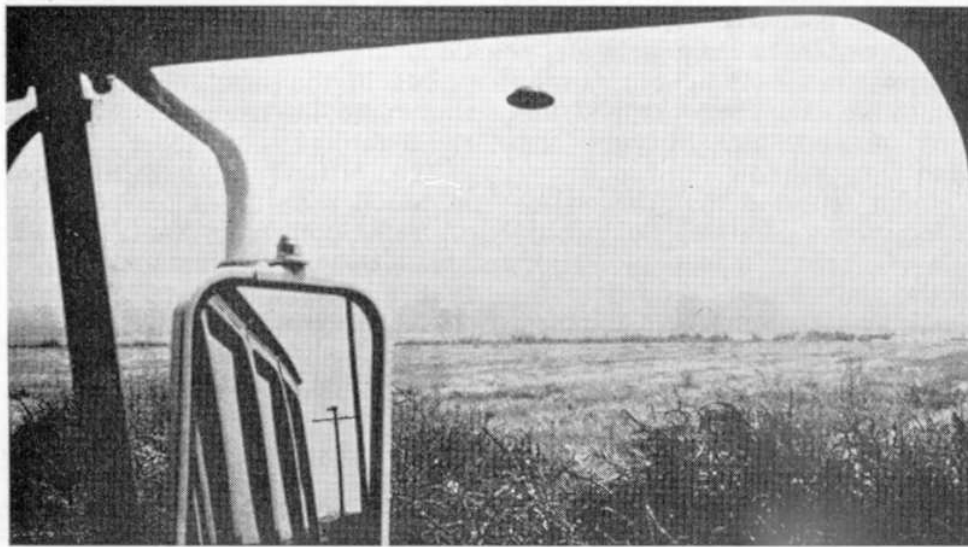
Probably the pieces of evidence most important to the sighting are the photographs. Some of the questions Evers and Grey wanted answered about these were: Did Heflin rush to the local newspaper with his pictures? Was he anxious to tell his story and possibly make a few dollars and/or get some notoriety?

They found there had been a lapse of about a month between the time Heflin saw the object and the day the story and photos first appeared in *The Santa Ana Register*. Heflin told Ed Evers he had thought the strange craft was some kind of experimental plane sent up from the Marine base nearby and for this reason didn't show the pictures around.

A few days later Mr. C. H.



Photograph 1. Taken through windshield. Heflin claims UFO was crossing highway from the left



Photograph 2. Taken through right side-window. There was stated to be a beam of light under the disc. This is discernible on an under-developed print of this picture

Hoiles, co-publisher of *The Register*, came into the drug-store which is owned by a friend of his and saw copies of the Polaroid prints. Hoiles asked for copies for his newspaper.

In a signed statement the chief photographer of *The Register*, Clay Miller says, "After many telephone calls and several days we ran down Heflin and encouraged him to bring the original photos into the office. When Heflin brought the photos to *The Register* office they caused much interest. Everyone crowded around to look at them. To me the photos looked clear, with all parts of the picture in focus—from the window and mirror to

the UFO and then farther on down the road to the cars."

Photographer Miller explained that the pictures were small and in order to show up well in the newspaper they had to be enlarged. The enlargements show some grain and are less sharp than the originals.

Miller concluded his statement by saying, "Under much questioning Heflin gave the same answers and said he really did see the UFO and did take a picture of it. He did not seem to want to dodge any issue that was brought up and had a complete answer for each question. In my opinion he appeared to be a sincere, honest person. As far as

I could tell the photos were authentic and had not been altered in any way whatsoever."

Ed Evens asked Heflin if NICAP might borrow the original Polaroid prints in order to conduct a closer study of the details.

Heflin replied: "If I had the prints NICAP would be welcome to borrow them. Unfortunately NORAD (North American Air Defence) has them and I'm not sure when they will be returned. I have no idea who the person was that borrowed them so I will have to trust to his honesty to return them. He did state that he was from the North American Defence Command G-2 and he displayed a folder containing various coloured credentials."

Heflin did not ask for a signed receipt for his pictures. Previously he had loaned them to the El Toro Marine Station and had received them back in good condition. He saw no reason why NORAD would not act in a like manner. Now NORAD denies any knowledge of their whereabouts and the original photographs have disappeared.

Rep. James B. Utt wrote to NORAD requesting information about Heflin's missing prints. In his letter of reply NORAD's Chief of Staff, Maj. Gen. M. M. Magee, wrote, "For your information NORAD does not have the responsibility for evaluation of UFO's and therefore would not knowingly be in the business of collecting UFO pictures for evaluation. In addition the office of primary interest for UFO matters is the Department of the Air Force."

Major General Magee did not explain why, under these circumstances, the El Toro Marine Station had borrowed the pictures and why it would be impossible for NORAD also to have borrowed them.

Nearly two months after the sighting the Air Force contacted Heflin and arranged to interview him at his office. On September 23, 1965, Capt. C. F. Reichmuth of the Space Systems Division in Los Angeles questioned Heflin for three and a half hours.

Eventually the Air Force Office of Information in Washington,

D.C., released their official evaluation of Heflin's photos: "The camera was probably focused on a set distance and not on infinity as the terrain background was blurred in all three photographs. The centre white stripe on the road and the object appeared to have the same sharp image. Therefore, it is believed that the object was on the same plane as the centre white stripe (or closer) to the camera and could not possibly be the size reported. Using the width of the road as a factor, the size of the object was estimated to be approximately one to three feet in diameter and 15 to 20 feet above the ground."

It is immediately apparent that there is a difference of opinion regarding the sharpness of the pictures. Chief Photographer Miller of *The Register*, who examined the original prints, stated that the photos looked clear with *all parts* of the picture in focus. The Air Force, who prefaced its evaluation by saying it was based on enlargements made from copies of the original prints, tells us the background is blurred.

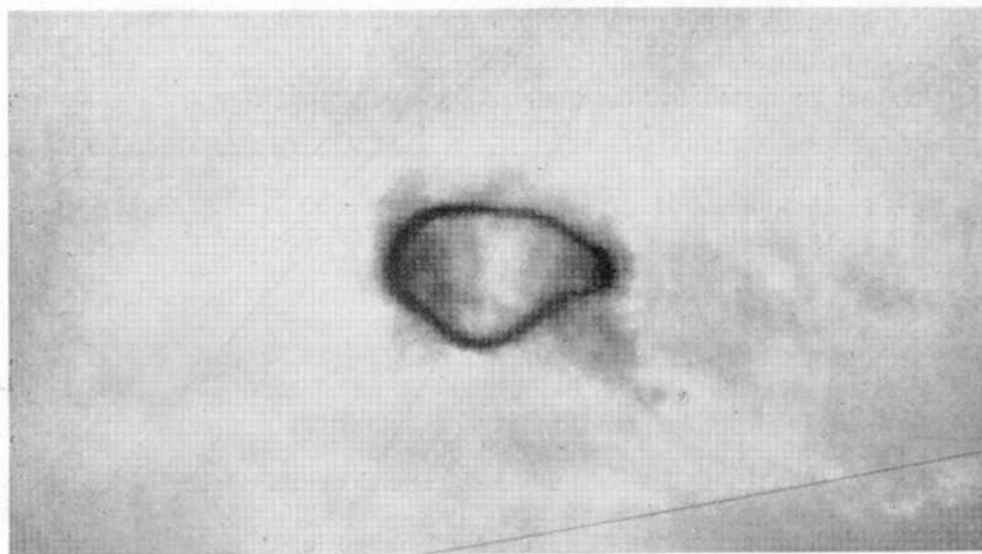
I also am a professional photographer and I also made enlargements from copies of the original prints and found them sharp throughout. In fact, the power lines which are parallel to the freeway and which were some 1,500 feet from the camera in the background are finely resolved.

It should be pointed out that the camera which Heflin used—Model 101, Polaroid—makes it very difficult to take pictures in which the background is out of focus. The camera, with a 114 m.m. lens, has an effective aperture of f:42 in black and white operation. This extremely tiny lens opening ensures a tremendous depth of field. (This is the zone of sharpness from closest to farthest points "in focus".) According to Polaroid's calculations even if the camera had been focused as close as 8.5 feet the background would be sharp.

Another statement in the Air Force "evaluation" makes one wonder at their reasoning. They compare the sharpness of the



Photograph 3. Through the same side-window, just before object began to accelerate away towards the North



Photograph 4. Taken four minutes after No. 3 from outside the truck, after Heflin, so he stated, had driven as near as possible to the smoke-like ring of vapour which remained where UFO was last seen

object with the centre white line and conclude that the object is "on the same plane as the centre white stripe (or closer) to the camera." However, since this white stripe runs diagonally from the foreground of the photograph to far off into the distance how can they use this line as a gauge of nearness to the camera? In reality, there are *no two points* on that white stripe which are equally distant from the camera!

Finally, the Air Force's conclusion that the object was estimated to be approximately one to three feet in diameter is disputed by NICAP's investigators, Ed Evers and John Grey, both aerospace engineers. They point out

that based on an angular size of two degrees 33 minutes the following sizes and distances would compare:

A one-foot object would have been 22.5 feet from the camera; a two-foot object would have been 45 feet from the camera; and a three-foot object would have been 67 feet from the camera.

In a recently published statement NICAP pointed out, "It is interesting to note that when the pictures first were publicised and before the Air Force had anything but a newspaper print of the pictures to examine a quick statement was issued by the chief investigator at Wright-

Patterson Air Force Base, Dayton, Ohio, claiming the object was small and at close range. It appears the Air Force now is trying to bolster this hasty conclusion with a pseudo-scientific analysis."

NICAP has been trying to interest some of the Congressional representatives in Heflin's area to push for a Congressional hearing on this matter. Representative Utt said he would not seek a Congressional hearing unless Heflin requested it. The publicity-shy Heflin said he was undecided and at the time of this writing still had not made up his mind.

Another lawmaker, Representative Hanna, Democrat of Anaheim, Calif., said, "If this NICAP is as responsible as their membership would indicate I feel they should be heard out on their

request for Congressional appraisal of the situation."

Hanna added, "I also want strongly to state that I feel every citizen should be accorded courteous treatment when dealing with a public agency, whether that be my office or the Air Force. To be insulting to persons whose actions are well-meaning is something that should not be condoned."

Ed Evers, who got to know Heflin quite well during the investigation, said that the longer he knows Rex the more he trusts and respects him.

Heflin does not enjoy publicity and does not want to write about the experience. He seems to take a minimum interest in UFOs and was extremely careless with the original Polaroid prints. He has resented very much the Air Force inference that he is a liar but

now all he wants is to be left alone.

Editor's note: *All Mr. Gibbs-Smith's questions seem to have been taken care of except No. 8. This was: "Considering the strong light which is evidently lighting the UFO from the right, why are there no shadows being cast upon the road by the telegraph poles on the right?"*

Pictures 2, 3 and 4 were taken facing away from the right-hand side of the truck, the direction in which the UFO was said to have disappeared, and stated to be towards the north. Yet in photo 1, the sun's light must be coming from the right-hand side of the truck—and the time was stated to be 11.30 a.m.

I hope Mr. Rankow will be able to clear up this little matter of the direction in which the shots were taken.

A High-Pitched Buzz

by Dan Lloyd

WHEN I first installed my "little black box"—alias the McCarthy UFO detector—it occupied a prominent place in my King's Road, London, flat, and I delighted in running a magnet over it just to prove that the thing *did* buzz. After a while, no naturally-induced buzz having been forthcoming, I moved it into my bedroom, connected it to a battery, and forgot all about it. Some months later I decided to see if it was still responsive to my magnet, but discovered that the battery had run down and the detector was inoperative. As I preferred the simplicity of a battery to the business of connecting the detector to the mains and having to press the reset button every time the lights went out and I put a shilling in the meter, I bought a new battery, fixed it to the detector and resigned myself to a further period of magnetic silence. This silence duly reigned—but only for three days.

At exactly 2.55 a.m. on the morning of Wednesday, October 25, I awoke to an unfamiliar sound. My detector was buzzing its head off! Unless my flat mate had crept into the sitting-room where the detector was installed and run a crafty magnet over it, something was up—decidedly! I leapt out of bed and hurtled into the sitting-room. No crafty flat mate was in sight—he was busy rubbing the sleep from his eyes upstairs—but the detector was there, buzzing like the devil. Rushing to the window-sill, I switched the instrument off and swept the sky with what was intended to be a comprehensive gaze but probably resembled, at that god-forsaken hour, the myopic stare of a startled weasel.

The sky was blank. I raced towards the back of the

flat and poked my head out of the kitchen window. Blank again. Then I saw why. Thick, low cloud completely obscured the sky. Whatever was up there was effectively hidden. Even the moon was invisible.

So, although the weather conditions prevented me linking the alarm with a visible object, I had at least been assured of the efficacy of the detector in giving utterance to the presence of a strong magnetic field variation, the first time it had spoken in three months.

It would be interesting to find out whether anyone else in the London area possessing a detector could corroborate this "hearing". If so, please drop a line to the REVIEW, giving details.

I hope shortly to be able to produce a regional list of detector owners so that incidents of this kind can be more promptly confirmed by telephone—providing, of course, the UFOs keep to waking hours!

Postscript

Since writing the above, my detector has been working overtime! It sounded at 9.5 p.m. on November 29, and the following night, the 30th, it sounded *four* times between 7.23 p.m. and 7.27 p.m.* Visibility was excellent on the night of the 29th, but the windows of my flat give only a limited view of the sky and I missed whatever was the cause of the alarm. On the 30th, low cloud prevented the observation of aeroplanes, let alone UFOs.

This burst of activity is certainly evidence that the detector's coil is picking up magnetic changes—but I am still waiting for visual proof that these changes are caused by a UFO. Time, patience and a clear sky will tell!

* In effect, it restarted each time I took my finger away from the reset button.